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245 a vine-clad tree, which was called "pu la." Wanderers of other nationalities, happening to discover such trees, dispoiled them of their treasure by cutting the vines. Thus, but very few "pu la" remain.

Dr. Mason tells us that "Karen boys and maidens engaged in harvesting these leaves with great zest and it was not uncommon for young men, in seeking companions to inquire who were the most agile climbers of 'pu la' or betel leaf trees." [4]

231 The Karen in Toungoo have always raised more or less silk and woven the material for their best garments from it. The silk-worms are of a native variety and spin a thread far inferior to that of improved species. Not many years ago the attempt was made to introduce a worm of larger size, but it met with ill success, because the creature made a peculiar creaking sound in chewing the leaves of the mulberry tree. The superstitious people thought the new worms were possessed of some strange demon and killed them, in order to ward off an unknown danger.

314 Many of the inhabitants of Karenni gather stick-lac, which is
386 the deposit of an insect on certain trees found in the jungle. They also increase the supply by attaching the insects to other trees. The deposit is used extensively in making red dyes [5] and is marketed in Toungoo on the twigs to which it is attached.

231 The Karen is skilled in all jungle-craft. He knows the woods
137 and what may be found there. He has learned, among other things, that bees establish their hives high up in the branches of the oil-tree *(Dipterocarpus lociis)*. When he finds a new hive he marks the tree by putting a tuft of grass at its foot. Others will recognize the mark and respect his claim. To climb the fifty or seventy-five feet to the lower branches of these giant trees is no easy task. However, it is accomplished by means of pegs driven into the trunk and a rope encircling it. Often a honey-gatherer makes his ascent at night, lest he grow dizzy in looking down from such a height. Once at the hive, he smokes the bees out with a smudge and collects the honey into joints of large bamboo. The Karen villagers in the vicinity of Thandaung used to be called "Wild Bees" by the Burmans of Toungoo, on account of the supplies of honey which they brought in from their hills.

482 Besides the pursuits already mentioned, the Karen of the hills
492 sometimes engage in other occupations, such as transporting pro-

[4] *British Burma, Its People and Productions*, p. 495.
[5] See page 110.

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The translation of the former is:

"Walk, walk the bridge. If it falls the bigger it is," meaning the bigger the bridge, the greater the fall. The rendering of the latter is:

"Walk, walk, the bigger the man, the greater the fall."

When playing with the chickens, children sometimes catch one of them and pretend to rock it to sleep, droning the while:

"Hsaw hpo, mi, mi.
N' mo n' pa leh hsu Yo.
Heh ke so ne na p' theh tha wa ko lo.
Aw gha lo gha lo.
Me aw, hsaw hpo."

The translation of this runs,

"Sleep, sleep, little chick,
Your mother and father have gone to Shanland.
They will come back, bringing you a supply of
white betel-nuts.
You can eat them one by one.
Sleep, little chick."

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Both boys and girls play with the seeds of the giant creeper ("maw keh"). These seeds, which are often two inches in diameter, look much like flattened horse-chestnuts or buckeyes. They come from the enormous pods, a yard or more in length, of the vine, *Estada pusoetha*, which grows a hundred yards or over along the tops of the forest trees.[6] The games in which these seeds are used are played in the dry season. An even number of players is required, divided into two equal groups or "sides." Each side must have the same number of seeds, which are made to stand on their edges by being set in grooves in the hard earth. The rows thus formed are from eight to ten feet apart, according to the age of the children playing. One player begins by spinning a "shooter" at the opposite row, aiming to knock down one or more of the nuts in it. Whether he succeeds or not, his opponent takes his turn, and the players thus shoot alternately back and forth, until one row or the other is entirely knocked over. The winning side is, of course, the one that first demolishes the other's row.

In another game played with these seeds the two sides are again equal in the number of players. However, only those on one side

[6] Burmese children also play with these seeds.

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CLIMBING THE COCOANUT-PALM

Often they climb the palm without any aid whatever. But in this case the boy has bound his feet together loosely with a Burmese loin-cloth ("longyi") to enable him to grip the trunk more easily.

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776 made to them lest their anger should be aroused by some untoward
782 act on the part of men. Their special task is to preside over births. Their king occupies himself with the creation of men, but, being interrupted continually by various demands upon his attention, he turns out many defectives, cripples, and badly colored ones. This poor workmanship led men in the past to revile the "Mü xa," who, consequently, no longer show themselves to mortals. They have the power to unite the souls of those whom they have predestined to marry. Those thus paired are vouchsafed prosperous and happy lives; but if they succeed in mating with others than those intended for them, incompatibility and adversity surely follow. The "Mü xa" are often addressed as though they were the parents of mankind and appear to hold places comparable to that of Zeus or Jupiter among the gods of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They are often spoken of in Karen lore as dwelling on Mount "Thaw Thi," as Zeus in Greek mythology had his abode on Mount Olympus.[2] In the celebration of family rites and feasts the "Mü xa" are recognized by having words addressed to them, although the family spirits, commonly designated as "Bgha," are often thought of as the powers to be propitiated at this ceremony. In some sections of the country the "parents of mankind" are supposed to receive offerings in their extended hands, which are thereby cleansed. They are then expected to return to their celestial abode, the hope being that they will not descend again to the dwelling-place of mortals, lest, by some mischance, they should become offended and bring misfortune upon men. They are believed to be able to assume any form they wish and to render themselves visible or invisible at will.[3]

776 One member of this group, called "Mü xa hkleu," is thought to
137 preside over the much-venerated banyan *(Ficus religiost)*. It was
824 under a banyan tree that Gautama Buddha received his enlightenment. The banyan is, however, held sacred by most of the tribes of
136 Indo-China, even though they are not Buddhists. No doubt the won-
137 derful vitality of the seeds of this tree which germinate anywhere, especially in the crotches of other trees and in the head of the palm, later enveloping, killing, and thriving on its host, has helped to evoke the veneration of the peoples familiar with the banyan. According to the Karen legends, the rhinoceros ("ta do hkaw") is the beast on which the guardian spirit of the banyan tree is accustomed

[2] See Chapter XXV in regard to Mount "Thaw Thi," pp. 262-264.
[3] For a description of the rites tendered to the "Mü xa" see pp. 248, 254, 260.

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to ride when searching for the "k' las" of human beings. Any person who kills one of these animals arouses the enmity of the spirit.

The "Hti k' sa kaw k' sa," or "lords of the water and land," or "lords of the earth," are the deities who rule over the lands of the earth. They are superior to the spirits that preside over rivers and mountains and have tempers that are easily disturbed. Ill-spoken words, as well as improper and immoral actions, easily offend them; and they take vengeance on persons guilty of such misdemeanors by sending tigers, snakes, and various illnesses upon them. They are sometimes confused with the king of hades, who also passes judgment on the sins of mortals. One way to avoid angering the lords of the earth is to scrape a little rice from the top of the pot while cooking and lay it aside as an offering to them. Concerning their relation to these divinities, the people say that if they transgress in their language while in a distant land, the lords of the earth will kill them before dark; but if guilty of swearing or using indecent words in their own country, they can assuage the anger of these spirits by making an offering of rice and water at the foot of a tree and uttering the following prayer: "O Lords of the earth, we are ignorant people. Whatever transgressions we have been guilty of in using harsh or obscene words, do not, O Lords, hold them against us. We will make offerings annually. If we do not die, you shall eat of our food every year and of our children's offerings generation after generation."

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Every tree, river, lake, and, indeed, almost every natural object is supposed by the Karen to be inhabited by its "k' sa" or divinity. These local spirits, however, are regarded by many as constituting lower orders of the divinities of the first group. When a man selects the location for his field, he must perform certain ceremonies to win their good will. The simplest of these is to place offerings of rice and water at the foot of some large tree in the plot chosen or to go through the ceremonies described in the chapter on Agricultural Pursuits and Other Occupations.[4] There are also the annual sacrifices to these spirits that have been described fully in the chapter on Propitiatory Sacrifices and Healing Offerings, pp. 234, ff.

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The nefarious work and character of "Naw k' plaw" or "Mü kaw li" have been sufficiently revealed in the narration of the story of his temptation of the first parents of the Karen race in the

[4] See ante, pp. 76, ff.

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753 787 782 a pig from rooting in the garden to follow an ear of corn back to its pen. Having gone through this performance, the carrier stealthily returns, trying on the way to deceive the demon into believing that he has taken some other trail by blocking the one he has actually followed, and fondly thinking that he has removed the cause of the sickness of the member of his household.

I am led to believe that many offerings are made in remote districts that belong in this group, although I have obtained no accurate account of them. The recital in the succeeding paragraphs will suffice, however, to convey a general idea of the nature of these rites, in all of which, when the ceremony is concluded, the wrist of the patient is tied around with a string to keep the "k'la" from getting away again.[6]

The offering made when the "T're t' hka," or ghosts of evil tyrants that inhabit the deep jungles, wander into the village and attack the "k' la" of some one, is called "Ta taw law ta." This rite requires the weaving of a small basket, in the bottom of which cotton is laid, and on this four lumps of cooked rice, one colored black with soot, another yellow with tumeric, the third red with amotta berries (from the *Bixa orellana*), and the fourth left white. A [137] chick is tied to the basket, being made secure by binding both its wings and its feet. Finally, sprigs of yellow and white cockscomb are laid in the basket.

The basket thus fitted out is carried beyond at least two ridges of hills to a place from which it is believed the demon will not be able to find its way back. There the basket is set down with its contents, and the following petition is offered: "We are bringing you red and yellow rice and yellow and white flowers, O Great 'T're t' hka.' Go back to your own place. Keep away from us." The performers of this rite may sweep a spot under the basket and pick up a clod of earth near at hand. Calling the "k'la" to follow them they leave the chick and rice with the basket to be the food of the ghost and return home. As they go along they break off branches which they place in the path to throw the demon off their track, should he attempt to follow them.[7] On arriving at the house, they

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[6] It is not uncommon to see a black line tatooed about a Karen's wrist, the obvious purpose of which is to serve as a permanent hindrance against the escape of his "k'la," thus preventing sickness.

[7] In traveling if one who goes ahead wishes to warn those following not to take a certain path, one puts branches across its entrance. Thus, notice is given that the path is "killed" and not to be taken.

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bolic, and also in the fact that the patient performs the rite in his own behalf.

III. Offerings to the "K'la" Itself

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Sometimes the auspices indicate that the "k' la" of an ill person has departed by reason of fright or from some other cause than being enticed by a malicious demon. The place to which it has gone and the method by which it may be won back are also shown by the omens. In such cases the appeal and offerings are made to the "k' la" itself.

In performing the rite known as "Ta kweh k' la hpa do" (the great ceremony of calling the "k'la"), two black fowls, namely, a cock and a hen, must be killed by wringing their necks. Their internal organs must be cleaned and replaced and the birds cooked whole. They are then laid on a tray on which are three Malay apple leaves, seven lumps of cold rice, and a cup of fragrant water.[10] The tray with its contents is set at the head of the stairs or ladder, and a lighted candle is placed there. A white cotton thread is carried from the tray to the foot of the stairs and fastened. The fragrant water, after being blown upon by the head of the house, is sprinkled on the family and on the stairs.[11] A lump of rice is then charmed and thrown down the stairs, which are beaten with a stick, and the "k' la" of the invalid is summoned. The call is: "Pru-u-u k'la,[12]—heh ke, heh ke. (O Shade, come back, come back.)" If for any reason it is thought that the shade has not heeded this call, the operation is repeated until the family feels assured that it has returned. They then immediately break the string by means of which it has ascended the stairs and throw it away, lest it should again escape. With other pieces of string they tie up the wrists of the sick person and the other members of the family, meanwhile calling the "k' la" to remain. The patient is bathed all over with what is left of the fragrant water and is then expected to recover.

The rite of "Ta kweh k' la," or inviting the "k'la" to return, is performed in the house, like the one described above. The family

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[10] The leaves named (these of the "thabye" or *Eugenia malaccensis*) are generally used for this purpose, but I do not know why.

[11] When the Karen on the plains perform these ceremonies, in which the wandering "k'la" is expected to return to the house by the ladder, they retain the old-fashioned notched log that has served from time immemorial as the means of entrance to the house, but that is being superseded in modern houses by flights of stairs. They think the "k'la" will more easily return by the kind of stairs to which it has been accustomed.

[12] "Pru-u-u-" is a sort of trill which the women use in calling their children, pigs, or fowls, as well as their "k' las."